

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



NFB members join forces to form South East Construction Consortium

Members of the National Federation of Builders (NFB) from across the south east have come together to form the **South East Construction Consortium (SECC)** to compete on frameworks.

The consortium represents a growing solution to the challenges faced by small and medium sized (SME) building firms in winning public sector contracts. This was recently as highlighted in the NFB's Public Sector Procurement Survey 2009. The growth of regional frameworks, which bundle together individual projects into long term public infrastructure frameworks, means that many firms are being squeezed out of contracts that would normally be the backbone of the local construction economy.

The survey highlighted the need for SMEs to unite to increase their chances of winning work on public sector frameworks requiring higher turnovers. Working as part of a consortium enables companies to compete with larger competitors on the relevant issues of size, geography and experience.

South East Construction Consortium has been formed by four NFB members with strong regional profiles that, when combined, offer coverage for the entire area of the construction framework with specialisms in education, health, sports and leisure, housing, commercial, industrial, heritage, design and build and project management. The consortium unites the talents of **Baxalls** of Paddock Wood, as lead contractor, **ER Armfield** of Chertsey, **Wilding Butler** of Winchester and **Coombs** of Canterbury.

The combination of these four companies delivers an almost unrivalled level of regional experience and is a boost for the communities around these companies, which draw on local talent to fulfill their contracts.

Malcolm Clarke, Managing Director of lead contractor Baxall Construction, commented: "A certain level of turnover is sometimes a pre-requisite of clients, particularly local authorities, and we feel that the **South East Construction Consortium** will give us the size to be able to compete on a level playing field with any of our competitors which include national contractors.

"The members of the Consortium are four highly knowledgeable and experienced building contractors employing local people, local suppliers and local sub-contractors. We have come together to exchange information and benefit from the best practices of each company. The Consortium has a collective trading experience of over 200 years and an overall turnover of £50 million, carrying out projects throughout the south east from 50K to £8M in both the public and private sectors.

"Our major strength as a consortium is in offering value for money and a hands on approach to provide sustainable value for money solutions for all our customers."

Press Release

Julia Evans, Chief Executive of the NFB, whose 'Bid to Win' advisory service assisted in the formation of the consortium, said: "This pioneering breakthrough will act as an example and inspiration for local contractors throughout the country.

"Many building firms with the capacity to tackle large projects are excluded from bidding for work because of their size. This success has shown how they can join together and win a place on large framework agreements.

"Local contractors operate at the heart of the community, employing and training local people and making major contributions to local economies so it is only right that they are given the opportunity to bid for this work."

For further information on the Consortia services provided by the NFB please contact Membership Services and Training on 0845 057 0041/2 or email training@builders.org.uk

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Picture: Malcolm Clarke; Stephen Ball; Phil Wilding; David Hinchliffe